A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

NEWBURY, THIRD PARISH,

APRIL 18*th*, 1774.

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF

The Reverend Mr. DAVID TOPPAN,

TO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, AND PASTORAL CARE

OF THE

CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

IN THAT PLACE.

BY THE REVEREND

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MDCCLXXIV.

BRITISH MUSEUM

To the READER.

THE Author of the following Diſcourſe, was ſo well known and reſpected among us, and his Praiſe was in ſo many Churches of the Saints, that his Character will not receive any Advantage, or his Memory be more endeared, by any Thing ſaid or done by us.

But as the Sermon comes abroad a poſthumous Work, we are willing to accompany it into the World; as it gives us an Opportunity to teſtify our Eſteem of, and Regard for, the beloved Author, who preſided among us (as primus inter pares) ever ſince we have been an aſſociated Body; and to expreſs our Concurrence with him in this his laſt Teſtimony to the Doctrines of God's Grace, and their peculiar Influence into practical Religion.

As to him it was fully manifeſt from the general tenor of his public Preaching, that he was one who had the great Doctrines of God's Grace, here recommeded, much at Heart: And that he conſidered them, not as amuſing Speculations, but as fundamental Principles of practical Godlineſs. And how well the diſtinguiſhing Simplicity and godly Sincerity in which he had his own Converſation in the World, exemplified the good influence of them, they who beſt knew him can all bear witneſs.

The Miniſtry was his beloved Work: And he had the honor to be continued in it almoſt forty-five Years, with very little interruption to his Labours, until a few Days before his Death. And though arrived at the ſixty-ninth Year of his Age, his Powers were unimpaired; and never, perhaps, was he more abundant in Labours, than in the laſt Year of his Life; as a conſiderable part of that Year was a ſeaſon of great Affliction and Mortality among his People. And it was a Satisfaction to him, that he did not outlive his Uſefulneſs.

He was employed in introducing another Labourer into the Harveſt when the Maſter called him from the Field. For after he had delivered the Sermon here publiſhed, and aſſiſted in the ſolemn work of Ordination, he went home ſick to his Bed, which proved a dying Bed to him.

But he had ſweet compoſure and reſignation, through the whole of his Sickneſs; expreſſed an entire and cheerful Dependence on the Mediator; and departed in full Hope of being ever with the Lord.

The loſs of ſo valuable and beloved an Aſſociate we feel more, as by his removal we have Sorrow upon Sorrow; a ſovereign God having but a few Months before, bereaved us of another of our number, our youngeſt Member whoſe Memory will be ever dear to us.*

May the Deaths of our dear Brethren in the Miniſtry excite us to Duty and Diligence; that we may work while it is Day, conſidering that the Night is approaching.

And may the great Shepherd of the Sheep, have Compaſſion on the bereaved Flocks; and in his own Time ſend them paſtors of the ſame excellent Spirit with thoſe, who now happily reſt from their Labours.

JAMES CHANDLER,
MOSES HALE,
MOSES PARSONS,
June 14th, 1774. THOMAS HIBBERT,
GEORGE LESSLIE,
OLIVER NOBLE,
JOSEPH DANA.

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* The Rev. Mr. Chriſtopher Bridge Marſh, of Newbury-Port, who died December 3d, 1773, aged thirty years, having but little more than compleated the fifth year of his miniſtry.

AN ORDINATION SERMON.

TITUS, Chapter III, Verse 8.

These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.

THOSE doctrines of the gospel which exhibit the free rich and sovereign grace of God, in choosing, calling, justifying, sanctifying and saving, self-ruined and law-condemned sinners, are very important doctrines. Paul's epistle to the Romans, is so full of these precious doctrines, that some have called it *the marrow of divinity*,

And it is of great importance unto the ministers of the gospel, as well as unto the people of their charge, that their hearts, their mouths, and their ministry, be full of these doctrines: For, as the Apostle in the clause next following our text, testifies, *these things are good and profitable unto men*: *i. e.* All these doctrines are true in themselves, and, as such, have a substantial goodness in them; and are profitable for men to know and understand.—And Paul's head and

heart, were so full of the ideas and sense of these doctrines, after he had experienced the efficacy of God's grace in his conversion, that they flowed from his mouth and pen, frequently, when he was not treating of them, *de industria*, with design, but of the duties of the christian life, which are best founded on them, and do most genuinely spring from them.

So in this epistle, the main scope whereof is to direct Titus, a minister, and Paul's partner and fellow-helper, what persons he should ordain as ministers, how to deal with false teachers, and how to behave himself, both as to preaching and living, towards all sorts of persons, he cursorily touches, and lays the basis or foundation of practical religion upon them.

He begins this third chapter with an exhortation to Titus, to inculcate on his hearers obedience to magistrates, readiness to every good work, and love and meekness towards all men, verse 1, 2. But then he urges and enforces the practice of these duties, so contrary to corrupted nature, by a reason taken from their own former corrupt state, and the grace or free and unmerited goodness of God which had appeared unto them. Verse 3, 4. *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared—he saved us according to his own mercy*, verse 5.

The argument plainly is this:

If we ourselves were formerly without wisdom, slaves to our sensual appetites, malicious

and envious, deſerving to be abominated by good men, and hating them; (as indeed this was our ſad caſe) and are now, of God's mere goodneſs and tender mercy, unmerited by any works of righteouſneſs that we have done, ſaved; we ought to pity ſuch as are ſtill what we were; and to forbear wrath and paſſion in our converſe with them, and do them all the good we can.

And when the bleſſed apoſtle had touched this his beloved ſtring, he harps a while longer on it; and declares in what manner and to what end, they were delivered out of their corrupt and miſerable ſtate. "Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy, he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt; which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour: That being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life," *v.* 5, 6, 7.

And perceiving the powerful tendency which the doctrines of God's free grace, in ſaving vile ſinners by the waſhing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, and juſtifying them through his free love, and making them heirs of eternal life, without any of their own works of righteouſneſs as procuring cauſes——Perceiving the powerful tendency which theſe doctrines have, to excite in thoſe who believe in God, and receive them as true, a carefulneſs to live in all righteouſneſs and holineſs; he does with counſel and deliberation, *will*, that Titus ſhould in his miniſtry and preaching, maintain and ſtand to and by them, for this very purpoſe, viz. that

believers might be careful to maintain good works.

These things, i. e. these doctrines which I have even now declared, respecting the kindness and love of God our Saviour, appearing towards such foolish, disobedient vile sinners as we were, in saving us, not on the account of works of righteousness which we had done, but from his own bowels freely yearning upon us in our misery—I will that thou affirm these things, assuredly and constantly, or strongly: Not, that believers *ought to be* careful to maintain good works (though that is true) but affirm these things that believers *might be* careful to maintain good works; their carefulness to maintain good works being the mark or end which ministers should aim at, and labour to attain, by their affirming these doctrines of God's grace.

And agreeable to this construction of the words, Pool's Continuator on the place thus interprets it: "This is the doctrine I would have thee preach, maintain stand and to; that those who assent to these things are true, and have cast their souls on God and JesusChrist for the fulfiling of them, *might* (considering good works are the condition annexed to the promise of this eternal life and salvation) be careful to practice all that God has commanded them, in all their relations.'

The obvious and important truth taught us in the text, is this,

That gospel ministers should affirm the doctrines of God's grace constantly, with this view, *or* to this end, *that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*

We have here recommended to us, a portion of duty for miniſters and people: And the duty of miniſters is expreſſed; that they conſtantly affirm theſe things. The duty of people that have aſſented to them, and have caſt themſelves on God and Chriſt, is implied: And it is a carefulneſs to maintain good works.

I ſhall therefore divide the general doctrine laid down, into theſe two branches.

1. That goſpel miniſters ſhould conſtantly affirm the doctrines of God's grace, with this VIEW or to this END, that believers might with carefulneſs do all that God has commanded them.

2. It is the duty of thoſe who have believed in God to be careful to maintain good works.

1. *Goſpel miniſters ſhould affirm the doctrines of God's grace, affirm them conſtantly, and affirm them with a view to make believers careful to practiſe the commanding will of God.*

This is *their* duty: Which I ſhall endeavour to open and confirm; and then offer the reaſons of it.

The doctrines of grace are thoſe doctrines of the everlaſting goſpel which do by way of eminence exhibit and illuſtrate the freeneſs, riches and glory of God's grace in the ſalvation of miſerable ſinners.

Such as, God's free chooſing of ſome to the unfailing attaining of grace here and glory hereafter, when he might have glorified his juſtice in the perdition of all, as being ungodly. This free choice miniſters matter of thankſgiving unto the God of all grace: Therefore the Apoſtle, II. Theſſ. 2. 13. ſays, "But we are bound to "give thanks always to God for you, brethren,

" beloved of the Lord, becauſe God hath from " the beginning choſen you to ſalvation, through " ſanctification of the ſpirit, and belief of the " truth."

Such as, God's effectually calling ſinners; giving them a deep conviction of their ſin and miſery; opening their minds to know Chriſt; renewing their wills; *compelling them*, againſt the current of nature's corruption, to lay down the weapons of their rebellion againſt God, and *to come in* unto Chriſt: Raiſing them by the power of his ſpirit from a ſpiritual death.

Such as, his redeeming ſinners that were priſoners of divine juſtice, by the precious blood of his own Son, without putting them to any coſt, or taking one farthing out of their pockets.

Such as, juſtifying them freely through the redemption that is in Chriſt: And, in a word, beſtowing eternal life and glory on them as his free gift, without regard had to any thing done by them, as meritorious, or procuring cauſes of it.

Theſe things, and others that ſtand in a neceſſary connexion with them, are the doctrines of grace, which the miniſters of the goſpel are to affirm, *I will*, ſays the inſpired apoſtle, and pattern of the clergy, in his directions to Titus, a miniſter, *I will, that thou affirm theſe things conſtantly.*

He would have him to *affirm* them: *i. e.* To maintain, eſtabliſh, or aſſuredly affirm them.

Aretus on the place, ſays, " The word relates as well to the perſon of Titus, as to his hearers; and ſignifies *to be confirmed*, and to increaſe in ſtrength and courage in any matter."

And truly Chriſt's miniſters who are to affirm

these precious doctrines for others belief and practice consonant thereto, had need be well confirmed and established in the truth of them, themselves: For how can they affirm strongly the truth and importance of them unto others, if they do not really belief the truth, and feel the weight of them, themselves.

Mr. *Taylor** says, "The original word" rendered *affirm*, "is a borrowed speech from those that give or sell a thing to another, who are bound to defend the title, gift or sale of it, against all claims, suits and entanglements."

And it behoves Christ's ministers to be so sure of the truth and weight of these things which they deliver to their hearers, as to be ready to stand bound to defend them, not only by their arguments, but by giving up their interest, their esteem in the world, their honour, and their lives too, in testimony of them, if called thereunto. They should be able to adopt the words of Christ, the great teacher of his church, John 3. 11. "Verily, verily I say unto you, we speak that "we do know, and testify that we have seen." Thus should they be able upon an assured knowledge, to affirm these great and important doctrines; and so to affirm them *constantly*, without doubting, hesitation or wavering in their own minds, or changing in their testimony of them to others.

Or, to affirm them *strongly*, as some think the word rather signifies; *i. e.* to press them home with all the strength they have, as things that nearly concern the glory of God, and the conso-

* See his Commentary on the Epistle to Titus.

lation, ſanctification and ſalvation of the precious and immortal ſouls of men. However they may be called in queſtion by ſome, and diſputed againſt by others, yet it is the duty of Chriſt's miniſters to be ſo aſſured of them themſelves, as to aſſert and affirm them as things moſt certain, and concerning which there are no juſt grounds of doubting.

Paul, in the face of all the learning and power of Rome, declares, "I am not aſhamed of the "goſpel of Chriſt, for it is the power of "God unto ſalvation to every one that be-"lieveth: For therein is the righteouſneſs of "God revealed, from faith to faith." Rom. 1. 16, 17. He had ſuch a certain knowledge of the truth of the goſpel myſteries, and his heart was affected with the hidden manifold wiſdom and grace of God, that he would openly and boldly publiſh theſe things, and ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs, though he was reckoned to be beſide himſelf, and in a degree mad and diveſted of his reaſon, by thoſe who were the wiſe and great men of the world.

And Chriſt's miniſters ſhould ſtrongly affirm the doctrines of the grace of God, *with this view*, and *to this end*, that believers might be careful to maintain good works. It concerns them to ſee that their aims and ends are right, in affirming theſe things.

A meer performance of the external part of duty, the doing of it without right views and ends, is ſuch a lame and defective performance of it, as that the defect is a ſin in the ſight of God, and mars the beauty, and hinders the acceptance of the whole with God.

We may not, my brethren, affirm the moſt concerning truths of the goſpel, merely to pleaſe a party of men who eſteem us, or who are kind and friendly to us; or out of affectation of ſingularity, or to pleaſe ourſelves in being contrary to other men. Theſe are views too low, and mean: And indeed it is a debaſing the glory of the goſpel, to preach it with any ends or views below thoſe God has appointed it for; one of which is, to make believers abundant in, and zealous of, good works. God's end then, ſhould be his miniſters; that they may juſtly deſerve the honourable ſtyle of workers together with God; as working from the ſame principle, about the ſame building, and for the ſame end.

Now the reaſons why goſpel-miniſters ſhould affirm the doctrines of grace conſtantly and ſtrongly, are many; ſome of which I ſhall hint at. As,

1. Becauſe they are truths in themſelves, not diſcovered by human ſagacity, art and induſtry, but by divine revelation: And ſo does not depend on the wiſdom of men, but the authority of God. And therefore, are proper things to be affirmed; for the teſtimony of God cannot deceive us.

2. Becauſe they are the ſubſtance and marrow of the goſpel, as it is contradiſtinguiſhed from the law. They are the hidden and manifold wiſdom of God, now diſcovered unto men. *The law was given by Moſes*; *but grace and truth* are come *by Jeſus Chriſt*. And the diſcoveries, promiſes, reſults and effects, of God's grace, are the main things of the goſpel, as it is good news, and glad tidings of great joy, ſent down from

heaven unto perishing sinners! How full of marrow and fatness is that declaration of the free love and grace of God unto sinners! John 3. 16. "God "so loved the world, that he gave his only be- "gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, "should not perish but have everlasting life."

3. Because they have a powerful tendency to make believers in God careful to maintain good works, and a course of vital holiness.

The preaching of the law is of use to convince hardened, secure sinners; to rouse their fear, and to hasten their flight to a glorious Christ, that they may be justified by faith in him: And it is of use to the faithful, as being a perfect rule to direct them in the way of holiness. But, it is the gospel of God's grace that gives wings to their endeavours after new obedience. This is as oil to their chariot wheels; This joy of the Lord is their strength.

It is observable that these doctrines are designed to excite *those that believe in God*, to the practice of piety. And it is certain all the doctrines of God's grace, and the sweetest declarations of them in the world, have no efficacy on sinners that do not believe and regard them.— It is with men as it was with the Israelites: They bowed down under the oppression of Egypt, so long as they did not believe any delieverance; but when God's love and favour was manifested in a promise of bringing them out of bondage, and they believed it, a new spirit came immediately on them, and they suddenly vindicated themselves from slavery: They cast off their oppressors yoke, and went forth to liberty.

Thus perſons who do not believe the doctrines of the grace of God, may well nouriſh their own fears, and like Iſſachar, couch down between two burdens, ſight of guilt, and ſenſe of ſtrong corruptions. But when goſpel grace appears in their view, preſently the ſoul lifts up it's head, and breaks the yoke off it's neck, and bids defiance to all it's ſpiritual enemies, and goes forth conquering and to conquer. He that has a ſpiritual belief of, and hope in, the grace of God declared in the goſpel, does induſtriouſly deſign to purify himſelf as God is pure.

St. Paul, who well knew the principles and ſprings of believers actions, tells us with reſpect to himſelf, That the love of Chriſt conſtrained him. Alſo, that the grace of God which appears to men, teaches them to deny all ungodlineſs, &c. And we know that fear is a weak principle in compariſon of love.

Felix may tremble, and remain unconverted and diſobedient. Zaccheus hears of ſalvation, and makes haſte and receives Chriſt gladly; and was ready to every good work.—Thus you have had ſome reaſons why miniſters ſhould affirm conſtantly, and ſtrongly, the declarations God has made of his grace in the goſpel. I proceed to ſay,

2. *That it is the duty of thoſe who have believed in* GOD, *to be careful to maintain good works.*

If miniſters ſhould preach Chriſt and the grace of God, for this purpoſe, and to this end, that believers may do good works, certainly it is their duty to do them, and that upon evangelical mo-

tives. They that have embraced Chriſt and his goſpel, are not at liberty to live as they liſt; but are *under law to Chriſt*, though freed from the law as a covenant: And are obliged not only to believe the doctrines and truths of the goſpel, but alſo to do the duties enjoined both in the law of God, and goſpel of Chriſt; and to be diligent in doing goodworks.

The good works which they are carefully to maintain, intend ſuch as are commanded of God, and ſpring from a ſupernatural principle, and are directed to the honor of God, as their ultimate end: "Such as are the vital actions of the new man; the motions of the new nature, whereof believers are made partakers: Such as men are created to, in Chriſt Jeſus. Thoſe works that do not proceed from ſuch a principle, and are not directed to ſuch an end, can be but equivocally called good; as not partaking of the nature of that which is truly, *i. e.* ſupernaturally good.

"Good works include and comprehend, not only the duties of the ſecond table, works of righteouſneſs and charity; but thoſe of both tables: And ſuch too, as are not only external, as being performed by the outward man; but alſo the inward actings of a gracious principle: As the workings of love, thankfulneſs, hope, humility and patience, though they proceed no farther than the heart: And, in a word, all that good fruit of all kinds, which grows upon this good root."

And believers are obliged to be careful to maintain theſe good works, on divers accounts;

though they cannot merit any favour or reward from God by them.

1. The command of God is a reaſon ſufficient, though no other could be given. For he is their ſovereign, and his will is their rule; and he has commanded them to be holy, to exerciſe themſelves unto godlineſs, and to follow diligently every good work, and to be zealous therein.

2. They are the way wherein believers are directed to walk, in order to life everlaſting. Eph. 2. 10. *We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we ſhould walk in them.*

3. They prepare believers for the heavenly world; as the practice of them, ſtrengthens, and increaſes good habits in them, and heightens the principle of grace, by the actual exerciſe of grace. And believers are thereby *made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light.* Though it is by faith, that believers are entitled to the ſupernatural inheritance of the ſons of God, (for we are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, *Gal.* 3. 26.—And if children, then heirs: yet over and above a title to it, there is requiſite a ſuitableneſs to, and fitneſs for it. And holineſs in the heart, and exerted in the actions of the life, and ſtrengthned by the exerciſe of grace and a courſe of good works, is that very diſpoſition, or temper of ſpirit, which fits men for heavenly employments, and enjoyments.

4. Good works are witneſſes of the truth and power of faith. A true faith works by love,

purifies the heart, produces holineſs, and ſhews itſelf by works, *Jam.* 2. 18. And is made perfect by works, *v.* 22, *i. e.* It is heightned and improved by its exerciſe in doing the will of God; as other good habits, or principles, are improved as to their internal ſtrength and power, by their actual exerciſe or vigourous action in doing well. And beſides, faith is made perfect by works in the ſame ſenſe as God's ſtrength is made perfect in our weakneſs; *i. e.* declaratively: Inaſmuch as works manifeſt the perfection and ſtrength of faith.

As effects do not communicate any perfection to the cauſe, only demonſtrate the perfection of it; ſo good fruit don't make a tree good, but ſhew that it is ſo.

I might add, if time would permit, That good works carefully practiſed help forward our comfort, conform us to our Saviour who went about doing good, are the end of good principles, the happy fruit of the doctrines of God's grace preached and believed; and glorify our Father in Heaven. John 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.*—And are not theſe reaſons enough for a careful practice of good works; though we can not merit heaven by them, nor oblige God to reward us for them, on account of the worthineſs of them?

For Improvement.

I. ARE goſpel miniſters in duty bound, upon ſo many and weighty reaſons as we have heard, to affirm conſtantly and ſtrongly the doctrines of God's grace?

My dear and reverend brethren, how unfaithful ſhall we be to the truſt and charge our Lord has committed to us, how much wanting to ourſelves and our people, and what a ſad reckning ſhall we have in the day of our final account, if we, either through fear of loſing our eſteem and intereſt in the world, or for any other cauſe, ſhrink back from our duty; and either totally ſuppreſs theſe precious and important doctrines, in our preaching, or but tranſiently and infrequently glance at them, and affirm them but faintly and unſteadily, as though we ourſelves did ſcarce believe them?

St. Paul could ſay, *Though I preach the goſpel, I have nothing to glory of: For neceſſity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the goſpel.* 1. Cor. 9. 16. And how ſolemn is our charge! As Paul ſpeaks to Timothy, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee therefore, before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word:* —May we ever feel the weight of theſe words, and the importance of our charge!

Many of the moſt fundamental and diſtinguiſhing doctrines of the goſpel have, in one age and another of the church, been neglected and deſpiſed, if not derided, by men that were

accounted wiſe in this world. The preaching of Chriſt crucified was formerly *to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.* And natural men, men unenlightened by the ſpirit of God, are for ſubſtance the ſame in one age as in another. But we are not to form and ſhape our principles or preaching, according to the notions or taſtes of a perverted world; but according to the form of ſound words delivered to us in the inſpired writings.

I know it is hard for us, being men of like paſſions with others, in our preaching to croſs the opinions of men, and offend our hearers and thoſe who are kind and friendly to us: And we ſhould be glad if we could pleaſe all men for their edification. But we muſt in the firſt place approve ourſelves to God: We muſt preach the goſpel in the ſublime diſtinguiſhing doctrines of it; and ſet forth the freeneſs, riches and glory of God's grace in the juſtification and ſalvation of vile ſinners.

We muſt affirm conſtantly, and preſs with all our might, theſe doctrines; whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear: Or elſe our unfaithfulneſs will inflame our future reckning.—And though we are not to confine our preaching to matters of doctrine that tend to illuſtrate the grace of God; but are to inculcate duties, and the neceſſity of good works, in their place and turn; yet *theſe things* ſhould be more than infrequently glanced upon, more than ſeldom and faintly affirmed: Theymuſt be wrought into our ſermons, and be the ſalt to ſeaſon them withal. They are the marrow of

the goſpel, and powerfully tend to promote holineſs of heart and of life. Wherefore,

II. Suffer me, who am unworthy to be put in truſt with the goſpel, or to bear a part in the miniſtry of it; who yet hope to obtain grace to be faithful; to exhort and encourage you, my dear brethren and fellow-labourers, in deſpite of all temptations ariſing from the frowns or flatteries of this world, to be faithful to our common Lord, and to affirm conſtantly and ſtrongly theſe doctrines of the goſpel, which do eminently diſplay the glory of his grace in the free calling, juſtification and ſalvation of ſinners:

In doing this, we ſhall honour God, diſcharge a part of our important truſt, be likely to win ſouls to Chriſt, and to promote the holineſs of thoſe who believe in him. And however we are accounted of among men, it is but a little time before our warfare ſhall be accompliſhed: And if we are wiſe and faithful ſervants, our reward is with the Lord, and our work is with our God: And one *Euge* from the mouth of our judge at the great day of account, will be infinitely preferable to the higheſt and moſt frequent encomiums of our fellow-worms. Oh! that we might have on our hearts a conſtant, impreſſive ſenſe of the truth and importance of thoſe words of our grand Employer, Rev. 2. 10. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

And now, my dear young friend and brother,—We joy in God, that he has raiſed you up among onr ſons to be an evangelical prophet; and given you ſuch a meaſure of gifts, natural, ac-

quired and ſpiritual, as have enabled you to approve yourſelf tothe churches in the vicinity, and to this church and congregation in particular, ſo far that they have in confidence of your ſkill and fidelity, with ſo much unanimity elected you unto the paſtoral office over them; and that you are willingly taking the overſight of them, giving up yourſelf unto the ſervice of Chriſt and their ſouls.

Your work is great and important; and your due performance or neglect of it, or negligence in it, will draw vaſt and vaſtly differing conſequences.

You have made a goſpel profeſſion of faith: And we hope that having felt the genuine efficacy of goſpel doctrines on your own heart, you will always affirm them ſtrongly among your people, both publicly and from houſe to houſe; and your heart will boil out the good matter of them into your converſation, and into your ſermons, ſo as that it will be remarked of you, *that your tongue is the pen of a ready writer*: And you will have a good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf; will win many ſinners unto Chriſt and his intereſt; by diſplaying before them the glories of the Redeemer, and the free and rich grace of God in him; and conſtrain them to purſue evangelical holineſs with unremitting vigour and unfainting diligence.

Our hearts, who have taken a part in the goſpel miniſtry before you, feel for you. Do not ſink under your burden. *Magnum opus, magnum auxilium**. You ſerve a good maſter; rich,

* As you have a great work, ſo you have great aid.

liberal, and of tender mercies. If you are faithful, he will give you ſtrength according to your day. He will be with you always, and his grace will be ſufficient for you.

You will have the prayers of many; and of your people, many, who we hope are near to God. You have a bleſſed and glorious hope ſet before you. And you have the word of your great Employer for it, which you may depend upon, that *in due ſeaſon you ſhall reap, if you faint not.*

Beloved brethren of this Church and Congregation of the Lord,

We congratulate you, on the favour of the great Shepherd of the ſheep, unto you this day; in giving you a Paſtor, of ſo conſiderable gifts for the miniſtry, though young and tender; and in uniting you ſo far in him, and in providing ſo well for his decent, comfortable and honourable ſupport, under the various burdens of his office, after ſome ſucceſsleſs efforts to ſettle a goſpel miniſtry among you. Your tears on account of your former Paſtor's removal from you, and of your being deſtitute of a ſtated, conſtant, goſpel miniſtry, are wiped away from your eyes.

We truſt you receive this aſcenſion-gift of Chriſt, with hearts elevated in the praiſes of the Redeemer: And that while he labours among you in the word of God and doctrine of Chriſt, and ſhines in evangelical holineſs in his converſation, the genuine fruit of this doctrine received into the heart, you will eſteem him highly in love, for his work's ſake, obey him in the

Lord, caſt a mantle of charity over his human frailties and unavoidable infirmities, hold him in reputation and honour; and encourage him by your prayers for him, attendance on, and profiting by his miniſtrations.

In a word, may the great Lord of the harveſt ſo aſſiſt and ſucceed him, ſo bleſs and proſper you, as that both he that ſoweth, and you that reap, may rejoice together, and receive wages unto eternal life.

And now, beloved in this aſſembly, are we, the Lord's miniſters, obliged to affirm and preach the doctrines of God's grace, that you who have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works? Enquire then ſeriouſly, whether this carefulneſs is in you, in due degrees, and does appear in all the ſubſtantial fruits of righteouſneſs and holineſs; and what your motives are?

Your faith is not genuine, if it is not a working faith. And your good works are but ſeemingly good, or gilded works, unleſs they ſpring from the ſupernatural principles of faith in God and Chriſt, and the love, fear and grace of God. A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit. You muſt firſt be created in Chriſt Jeſus unto, before you can do, good works: Muſt firſt be engraffed in him the *righteous branch*, *Jeremiah* 23. 5. before you can bring forth any of the fruits of righteouſneſs, or true holineſs.

But if your faith in God and Chriſt is genuine; as it is your duty, ſo it will be your diſpoſition, to maintain a courſe and life of vital

holineſs: And you ſometims feel the conſtraints of the free grace and love of God in Chriſt. You have no more quickning and powerful motive to do all that God has commanded you, than the conſideration of his ſuperabounding and free grace in chooſing, calling, juſtifying and ſaving, you and others, who had nothing that was lovely in you to draw the heart of God toward you, but on the contrary were full of that which is loathſome and deteſtable unto him; ill-deſerving and hell-deſerving creatures.

What an holy fervor did Paul feel, and what an incentive unto good works, from a ſenſe of the love of Chriſt, when he ſaid, 2 *Cor.* 5. 13, 14. "For whether we be beſide ourſelves, it is to God; or whether we be ſober, it is for your cauſe: For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us."

Let all of us who have aſſented to the great truths of the goſpel, and believed in God and Chriſt, be exhorted to adore God for opening to us the infinite ocean of his grace, in the doctrines of the goſpel; and to improve theſe ſoul-quickning and ſoul-ſaving doctrines, as motives to ſtir up in us a carefulneſs to maintain good works. Let us muſe on them frequently 'till a ſacred fire is kindled in our ſouls. What though we cannot bring God into our debt by our obdience; yet are there not reaſons and motives enough to make us zealous of good works? By them we ſhall obey God, walk in the way to life, ſtrengthen and heighten the principle of grace in us, prove the genuineneſs of our faith,

be conformed to Chriſt, edify our brethren, anſwer one great end of the declarations of God's grace;—and glorify our heavenly father;—and be ripening for the bliſsful viſion and full fruition of him in the heavenly world.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

I cloſe with a word, to thoſe in the aſſembly who do not believe in God, nor exerciſe any care to do his commandments.

You are inexcuſable: For the works of God, which are ſeen, bear the prints of his being and perfections: And his word carries in it internal evidences of it's divine original, and ſuperlative excellence; beſide the external proofs of it's verity. Your not believing theſe teſtimonies God has given of his exiſtence and attributes, and of his Son, does conſtructively make him a liar and involve you under a load of the moſt fearful guilt, and a ſentence of condemnation.

And what will you do when God riſes up in judgment againſt you? Where will you *cauſe your ſhame to go?* Let me beſeech you to come to a better mind; to admit the evidences of God's being and excellencies, and of the truth of the holy ſcriptures. Repent and belive the goſpel. Receive the great goſpel record, That God has given life to men, and this life is in his ſon, 1 *John* 5. 11. Embrace Chriſt, and his doctrines and inſtitutions. And may you ſo believe the doctrine of the grace of God in Chriſt, as to be

heartily diſpoſed to exert all your powers to the utmoſt ſtretch in his ſervice. And briefly, may you who have no good works to boaſt of, be humbled, and pardoned, and ſaved, of God's meer mercy, through the finiſhed work and perfect righteouſneſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt— To whom be glory everlaſting.

A M E N.

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ERRATA.

Page 4. line 5, *for* we feel more, read, *we feel most sensibly; and the more.* P. 10. l. 22, *for* ſtand and, read, *and ſtand.* P. 13. l. 6, *for* belief, read *believe.* P. 13. l. 8, *for* does, read *do.*

REV. DR. *LINN's SERMON.*

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